

**BOWDOIN COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART WILL PRESENT
LANDMARK JOSEFINA AUSLENDER RETROSPECTIVE
AND HUNG LIU'S *HAPPY AND GAY***

Brunswick, Maine—This winter, the Bowdoin College Museum of Art (BCMA) will present two exhibitions exploring the power of art to interrogate history, memory, and personal experience—all filtered through the lens of immigration. *Josefina Auslander: Drawing Myself Free* (December 11, 2025–May 31, 2026) is the first museum retrospective devoted to the Argentine-born, Maine-based artist. Focused upon the artist's decades-long practice in drawing, this exhibition, organized by the BCMA, features more than 90 works, from the 1970s to the present, and engages with Auslander's evolving styles and themes. *Hung Liu: Happy and Gay* (January 22 – May 31, 2026) explores how the artist reinterpreted the propaganda of her Chinese childhood, informed by her experience during China's Cultural Revolution, and her emigration to the United States. The exhibition features ten paintings, as well as a selection of prints, archival materials, and a video.

“These exhibitions invite viewers to reflect on how artists transform deeply personal and politically charged histories into forms of expression that reflect on the human experience writ large,” said Anne Collins Goodyear, co-director of the BCMA. “Josefina Auslander's extraordinary drawings span continents and decades, embodying a lifelong commitment to artmaking, even in the face of war, oppression, and migration. Hung Liu's works, in turn, reclaim and subvert the Socialist Realist visual language of her youth in China. In examining the images that shape our shared past, Liu encourages viewers to ask questions about the nature of their own childhood memories.”

Frank Goodyear, co-director of the BCMA, added “Both Auslander and Liu engage with histories of migration, trauma, and resilience, yet their work is equally marked by joy, imagination, and defiance. We have chosen to present these exhibitions side by side to highlight the ways in which artists across disparate cultures and places—Argentina and China, and the East and West coasts of the United States—use their creative voices to challenge received narratives and envision new possibilities.”

Josefina Auslander: Drawing Myself Free

Born in Buenos Aires in 1934 to immigrants from Poland and Lithuania, Josefina Auslander has devoted more than fifty years to the daily practice of drawing—work that she continues to this day. Educated at Argentina's National School of Fine Arts, she studied under prominent modernists including Antonio Berni and Manuel Espinoza. Following the political unrest and the threats posed by the military junta ruling Argentina in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Auslander left Buenos Aires to resettle in Cape Elizabeth, Maine. While the move disrupted her professional momentum, she has continued to work prolifically, integrating memories of Argentina with her experiences in Maine.

Early in her career, Auslander gained recognition for her use of graphite, colored pencil, and ink. This represented a departure from the norms of the time, when drawing was seen primarily as an intermediate medium, a step on the way to a finished painting or sculpture. Instead, Auslander has used drawing to create works that merge abstraction and Surrealism with references to architecture, the body, and

imagined landscapes, creating a unique body of work with clear through-lines. The exhibition includes representative works from multiple series produced by Auslender, from the 1970s to today.

Her early series “The Magic Space” (1971–1973) introduced her enduring interest in geometric form, tonal gradation, and dreamlike spatial constructions. The forms, while recognizable as landscapes, are haunting and otherworldly. Another series, “La Ciudad” (“The City,” 1974–1979), was inspired by Buenos Aires, the city Auslender loved and had called home for forty years. The drawings that comprise “La Ciudad” reflect both the built and natural environment of Buenos Aires in ways that balance abstraction and realism: monumental structures stretch in straight lines to the sky, but often in impossible architectural geometries, while the colors of traffic signals punctuate the surfaces in vibrant and violent ribbons. Dramatic clouds float gingerly overhead in some drawings, while fluttering sheets animate others.

By the mid-1970s, amid the political violence of Argentina’s “Dirty War,” Auslender’s imagery darkened. Her next series, “Los Cuerpos” (“The Bodies”), shows deep, saturated washes of colored pencil and ink in bright rusty reds—and the abstracted shapes of human bodies, bound, wrapped, and twisted in uncomfortable angles. In the series “Los Caprichos” (“The Caprichos,” 1981–2004), begun in 1981, she explored themes such as rupture, loss, and grief—unsurprising given the traumatic events in Argentina and her eventual decision to leave. The works in these series are among the largest scale pieces Auslender has created.

In adjusting to her new home in Maine, Auslender also turned inward—uncertain of the reception her work would receive in the United States after several decades of success in Argentina. The series “For My Own Amusement” (1999–2009) was intended as just that: artistic experiments not meant to be seen by outside eyes. But Auslender also sought ways to connect to earlier themes such as the urban environment, reimagined for her new experiences in the U.S., with series such as “Structures” (1977–2002) and “Voyage” (2001–2019). Another series, “Stendhal” (1996–2014), with a red-and-black color palette, reimagined her strong impressions from reading Stendhal’s 1830 novel *Le Rouge et le Noir* (*The Red and the Black*) as a young woman.

“Josefina Auslender’s work exemplifies the ways an artist’s life story—marked by grief, migration, resilience, and a fierce dedication to her craft—can be traced through decades of drawing,” said Cassandra Mesick Braun, Curator at the BCMA and the curator of the exhibition. “Her art invites us into a deeply personal yet profoundly universal conversation about belonging, loss, and creative freedom. We are excited to present this show with the support of International Artists Manifest. We are particularly grateful to Josefina for her collaboration, making it possible to bring these works, many unseen by the public, to our audiences.”

Hung Liu: Happy and Gay

Hung Liu: Happy and Gay presents a selection of paintings and prints by the late Chinese American artist Hung Liu (1948–2021). Born in Changchun, China, Liu came of age during Mao Zedong’s Cultural Revolution, enduring years of “proletarian re-education” on a rural farm before emigrating to the United States in 1984. The works in the exhibition revisit the “*xiaorensu*”—children’s books from 1950s China that also served as crucial tools of ideological indoctrination.

Enlarging and reimagining these small illustrations on a monumental scale, Liu transforms instruments of propaganda into richly layered paintings that invite critical reflection on the imagery that shapes national identity. With works drawn from the artist's later career, *Happy and Gay* underscores Liu's belief that "history is a verb... constantly flowing forward," revealing the ways memory and meaning are continually rewritten. This exhibition was organized by the Georgetown University Art Galleries, and guest curated by Dr. Dorothy Moss, director of the Hung Liu Estate, and Georgetown graduate students.

Bowdoin College Museum of Art

The Bowdoin College Museum of Art is the cornerstone of the arts and culture at Bowdoin. One of the earliest collegiate art collections in the nation, it came into being through the 1811 bequest of James Bowdoin III of 70 European paintings and a portfolio of 141 old master drawings. The collection has been expanded through the generosity of the Bowdoin family, alumni and friends, and now numbers more than 20,000 objects, including paintings, sculpture, works on paper, decorative arts and artifacts from prehistory to the present from civilizations around the world. www.bowdoin.edu

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